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L'AVOCAT DU DIABLE.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]



Devil
k-

W. Ford

L'AVOCAT DU DIABLE:

T H E

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE;

O R,

S A T A N V E R S U S P I C T O R.

TRIED BEFORE THE COURT OF UNCOMMON PLEAS,

—die—mens—ann—

By D. G. Ades.

Give to the devil his due.

OLD PROV.

L O N D O N:

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1792.



THE
EDITOR

TO THE

READER.

THE following is one of the most remarkable *special* pleadings I have ever met with: and yet, I believe, it has never been taken notice of by any of our public reporters; not even by the all-reporting Woodfall.

Who was the pleader, or where the Court of Uncommon Pleas is held, I am totally ignorant; but that is not to be wondered at: for I hardly know the places where any of our courts are held, save the *Court of St. James's*. —So incurious a mortal am I.

Nor is the precise time of this trial to be easily ascertained; as there is no date affixed to the scroll.

That

That it must, however, have happened not many years ago, is clear from intrinsic evidence. It must have happened after the death of the late king of Prussia, and before the death of the emperor Joseph*.

The MS. fell into my hands through a very ordinary medium: it was sent from the pastry-cook's, as a wrapper to half a pound of ham; which I generally eat for my breakfast. Now, as I never let one of these wrappers escape entirely unexamined, I was led to examine *this* one more minutely, both because it was in manuscript, and in verse: for I am extremely fond of every species of poetry; the poetry of the WORLD not excepted.—But what was my surprise to find a whole pleading in poetry?

Mr. Pope has, somewhere, told us, that it was easier for him to express his ideas in *verse* than in prose; even on ethical and metaphysical subjects. I am apt to think, from this specimen, that law matters are equally

* See ver. 150.

susceptible

susceptible of versification, and that poetical pleadings might be gradually introduced, to the great improvement of the bar, and the no small satisfaction of the judges and jury; who are obliged to hear a tedious profator, through a speech of hours, without his saying the one half of what is here condensed into 170 lines.

In the firm hope, that these may be a precedent to our younger barristers (the old ones are too wise or too obstinate to learn), I have, by the advice of an eminent lawyer, sent them to the press, without any comment or glossary, save a short note at the bottom of the first page; and another still shorter one at the bottom of p. 16. Adieu.

L'AVOCAT DU DIABLE, &c.

MY Lords! when the triple-crown'd pontiff of Rome
Of a SOUL, that's departed, determines the doom;
And dubs HIM or HER (through a pow'r that was lent
To PETER by CHRIST) a beatified saint:
The first thing he does, is severely to scan 5
The *morals* and *faith* of that WOMAN, or MAN:
For he-faints and she-faints are equally sifted,
Before to a niche in the PANTHEON they're lifted.
And, if but *one* flaw can be found in their story,
They never can enter *Maria-maggiore* *. 10

* St. Mary Major's, or the Pantheon at Rome; which is now dedicated to the Virgin Mary and all the saints; as it was formerly to all the heathen gods and goddesses.

The better to search for, and find such a flaw,
 An order is giv'n, to a limb of the law,
 To canvass minutely their lives, through each stage
 Of infancy, puberty, manhood, old-age :
 T' examine their parentage, birth, education, 15
 Their kindred, connections; their craft and profession;
 What they said, what they did; what they ate, what they drank :
 Were they tall, were they short; were they plumpish, or lank :
 How often they pray'd, and how often they fasted ;
 And if to their *exit* their *piety* lasted? 20
 So difficult is it—to steal into *bliss* !
 A Westminster scrutiny's nothing to this.
 Now, that limb of the law is miscall'd by the rabble,
 By way of contempt,—*L'avocat du Diable*.

I claim th' appellation in earnest; and here, 25
 As principal *counsel* for SATAN, appear :—
 For SATAN, who long, to the shame of our laws,
 Has greatly been injur'd, without any cause.

My

My lords! I am ready to swear on the Bible,
 That my client's aspers'd by an infamous libel. 30
 A Poet and Painter, with horrid accord,
 Have trickfied HIM out in the form of a LORD!
 Yes, my lords, they have giv'n to my client the features
 And form of the meanest of two-legged creatures!
 T'wixt whom and my client resemblance no more 35
 Exists, than between a *pucelle* and a *w—e*:
 As I now mean to shew, if your lordships will deign
 To hear me the case of my client explain.

Imprimis—The face of the *picture* is *dun*:
 But that of my *client* is *bright* as the sun! 40
 This even his enemies cannot deny;
 For they know that he's LUCIFER call'd in the sky.

Secundo—They've giv'n him an air most *uncivil*:
 But who such an air can ascribe to the DEVIL?

B²

My

My lords! can ye any thing gentler conceive, 45
 Than the manner in which he accosted old Eve?
 And which of Eve's daughters, who is not a prude,
 Will dare to maintain, that he ever was rude?

Then, *Tertio*—My lords! they have giv'n him a nose,
 That betokens a miser; which, ev'ry one knows, 50
 My client is not.—Has he ever, for gold,
 His boroughs in Hell to a minister sold?
 The bill of a taylor has ever he clipt?
 Or a neighbour, by *law*, of his property stript?
 Has he ever the mines of his sulphur or coals 55
 Shut up from the reach of the poorest of souls?
 While the *rich* and the *great* ones,—deny it who dare!—
 Have ne'er been refus'd their proportionate share.
 Has he ever—But why need I further proceed
 To trouble the court on a point—that's agreed.

So, *quarto*, my lords!—*Litigation*, I vow,
 Of this frightful portraiture stares in the brow. 60
 O calumny

O calumny clear! defamation prodigious!
I defy them to prove, that my client's litigious.
If he were, I'm convinc'd, that he, ev'ry court-day,
A myriad of lawyers must keep in his pay.
But he, with a wonderful patience, endures 65
To see himself daub'd in curst caricatures.
With wonderful patience, his *Sur-name* he hears
Abus'd by our black-guards! blasphem'd by our peers!
Nay PRINCES themselves, who are said to be civil
To ev'ry one else—misbehave to the DEVIL! 70
I'm sorry to add, that the *clergy* and *we*,
Who live by his bounty (as all men agree),
In the common abuse most ungratefully join,
And treat our great FRIEND—as the Jews treat their *swine*!

But *limners*, 'bove all the calumnious race, 75
Are ever distorting his figure and face.
With ev'ry thing ugly his likeness they load;
He's sometimes a *cormorant*, sometimes a *toad*.

Here,

Here, a fire-spouting *dragon*, he rides on the air!
 A forky-tongu'd *snake*, on the ground, he crawls, there! 80
 Ev'n then when, to answer some fanciful plan,
 They let him appear in the form of a *man*;
 So droll, or so dreadful a figure they make him,
 That none of his friends for the DEVIL can take him.
 He's now a *Mulatto*, in colour and shape; 85
 And now has the hair, and the snout of an *ape*.
 This day, he appears with the horns of an *ox*;
 The next, with the tail of a *monkey* or *fox*:
 His limbs are mishapen; his feet are but paws;
 And his hands, 'stead of fingers, are furnish'd with claws! 90

Yet all this, I say, he has patiently borne,
 And treated his fland'ers with infinite scorn:
 'Till now, that a varlet has plac'd on his shoulders
 The head of a LORD,—to the scorn of beholders!
 Nay, still he would wink at the horrid transgression 95
 Of the rules of *costume*, in the painting-profession,

If

If he were not afraid, lest some insolent noddy
Should—to a LORD's *head*, add the *rest* of the *body*.
He, therefore, has begg'd, I would take up his cause;
And claim the protection of Justice and laws: 100
For he swears, that he'd rather be painted a *bog*,
A *crocodile*, *snake*, *salamander*, or *frog*;
Or any thing else, how much ever abhor'd;
Than appear in the form of a pitiful LORD.

His just supplication I could not refuse; 105
So here am I come, with my BRIEF—and my MUSE:
And I trust, I have shew'n, that my client has been
Abus'd in a manner, before this, unseen.

And now for the penalty.—That must depend
On the eminent rank of my much-injur'd friend. 110
For who will affirm, that the *fame* of a *Peer*
And the *fame* of a *peasant* are equally dear?
Ought a libel on *Withers*, or *Walter*, or *Tooke*,
To be punish'd like that on an EARL, or a DUKE?

Would

Would *five* years in jail have a penalty been 115
 For any thing less, than—defaming a QUEEN?

Now, my lords! I maintain, that no peer in the realm,
 Nor ev'n the great MORTAL * who sits at the helm
 Of the vessel of state—has a bit better claim
 Than HE, for high damages, due to *leze-fame*. 120
 For, on what should their plea be supported, I pray?
 On *antiquity, birth, wisdom, valour, or sway?*
 I'll venture to say (whatfoe'er me befall)
 That, in all these respects, HE surpasses *them* all.

To establish the first, let it only be said, 125
 That the DEVIL was a PEER, before *Adam* was made:
 Nay, the *premier-peer* of th' angelical host!
 Can *Norfolk* himself such a privilege boast?
 And had he not dallied with fair *Lady Sin*,
 He still had remain'd the first peer of his kin. 130 -

* I am in a doubt, whether, by this, is meant his M——r, or Mr. Pitt.

Ev'n then, when MICHAEL had gotten his place,
 He bore his attainer with wonderful grace:
 And a PRINCE, tho' a fugitive, still is a PRINCE
 At *Brussels, Vienna, Worms, Coblentz, or Lintz.*

That, by *birth*, he's more noble, than any one here, 135
 From SCRIPTURE, the surest of vouchers, is clear:
 For what is poor MAN, a terrestrial clod,
 Compar'd with a SERAPH, resembling a GOD?

His *wisdom* must, also, be deem'd more than common:
 He cozen'd the wiliest of creatures,—a *woman*; 140
 The first of her sex!—and he daily beguiles
 Her wiliest daughters—in spite of their wiles!

His *courage* has never been question'd—He dar'd
 To fight with the GREAT ONE! and fought very hard.
 'Tis true he was vanquished, as well might be thought: 145
 Yet, still it is true, that he valiantly fought:

C

And

And when, worsted in battle, from *heaven* he fell,
 He bravely erected an empire in *hell*!
 An *empire* more pow'rful than all the joint states
 Of our *Georges*, and *Josephs*, and *Williams*, and *Kates*. 150

The libel, my lords! ye, by this time, must see
 To be *scandal. magnat.* in the highest degree:
 Yet, such is my client's good heart, he declines
 To insist upon *pillory*, *prison*, or *fines*:
 And all that he asks is, that never again 155
 A dealer in paint may his character stain:
 That never again, or on canvases or board
 His head be depictur'd, like that of a LORD.
 This, my lords! he expects from the laws of the land:
 The court can't refuse him so just a demand. 160

I know, it has been by a *barrister* said,
 That my client dare hardly call *law* to his aid.
 Why, forsooth?—For this reason —“His hands are not clean.”
 Has ever the petulant barrister seen

The

L'AVOCAT DU DIABLE.

19

The hands of my client? I'll wager a crown, 165
That *his* hands are as clean as the barrister's *own*.
"His hands are not clean!" Ah! *Tom! Thomas!* beware
How you risk an assertion like this. I declare,
That if ever such calumny drop from your tongue,
I'll have you *impeached!*—perhaps, have you *hung*. 170

My lords! I have finish'd. This court, so compliant,
Must grant me a RULE in behalf of my client:
And I doubt not, my lords, that, from what I have said,
You will order the RULE to be ABSOLUTE made.

THE END.



